



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Councilmembers Jones and Rigby File Legislation Establishing Racial Equity Task Force

Ellicott City, MD (August 27, 2020) – In response to the systemic injustices that have sparked community conversations throughout Howard County, Councilmembers Opel Jones and Christiana Rigby have filed legislation that would create the county's first Racial Equity Task Force (Council Resolution 142-2020). The Racial Equity Task Force will be charged with recommending legislation to the Howard County Council to address racial disparities and inequities in Howard County.

"Discussing race is not an easy topic, but to make sure we are fostering an even level playing field, for residents of color, we must continue to strive for an equitable and inclusive county, that will advance racial equity and social justice," said Councilmember Jones.

The task force will be comprised of subgroups exploring personal and public safety, land-use and housing policy, economic and workforce development, public health and environmental policy, education, and legislative processes. After a period of community feedback and response, the Task Force was assembled to include a diverse group of subject matter experts, community members, and youth representation on each subgroup.

"As leaders in Howard County, we must remain steadfast and progressive in removing obstacles that currently exist for our communities. This task force will elevate the voices of our community and establish actionable recommendations for the council to implement," said Councilmember Jones.

"Howard County is a diverse and multicultural community, and this is an opportunity to ensure that we have equitable and inclusive laws," said Councilwoman Christiana Rigby. "The purpose of this Task Force is to create a foundation for the legislative branch to analyze systemic racial inequity and take direct actions to support racial equity in our community."

The Racial Equity Task Force will identify recommendations for legislation and policy to change outcomes that have contributed to racial disparities and inequities and develop actionable legislative solutions that can be implemented by the County Council. If approved by the County Council, The Racial Equity Task Force is expected to begin its work in November 2020 and will meet through July 2021, delivering its final report in August 2021 to the County Council.

Jones and Rigby encourage advocates and community members to receive updates by emailing the Councilmembers at ojones@howardcountymd.gov and crigby@howardcountymd.gov or by texting *HOCOEQUITY* to 22828.

The proposed legislation was pre-filed on August 27, 2020 and will be introduced at the Council's legislative session on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Testimony will be accepted at the legislative public hearing on Monday, September 21, 2020. Howard County residents may sign up to testify after September 8 by visiting <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>. If you would like to submit written testimony, please email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.

To read CR142-2020, please visit <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Legislation>.

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